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Radha with her confidante

Mughal, about A. D. 1600

Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection

The Rasikapriya of Kesava Das

THE Museum possesses three leaves of a manuscript of the *Rasikapriya* of Kesava Das (Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection), and eighteen detached illustrations by the same hand from the same manuscript (Ross Collection). Two other leaves are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The dates of Kesava Das are not exactly known. His first work was issued in 1543 A. D., the *Rasikapriya* in 1591 A. D., and a third work in 1601 A. D., nor was this the last of his writings. We may take it therefore that he was born about 1520, that the period of his activity more than covered the reign of Akbar, and that he died an old man.

The *Rasikapriya*, like most of Kesava Das' works, is a treatise on rhetoric and literary analysis. It is by far the most authoritative of the many Hindi works on this subject (which is also dealt with at length in the Sanskrit literature on which the Hindi works are founded), and texts from it are frequently found on Pahari paintings illustrating the various classes of Nayakas (heroines). The work itself is long and detailed, and classifies heroes and heroines according to their circumstances, character, age, etc.; it also subdivides very minutely the different emotions and illustrates their expression. The work itself is, of course, in verse, and by no means easy reading; but Kesava Das is a true poet, and many of his descriptions are lyrical gems.

Illustrated manuscripts of Persian versions of Indian books—for example, the Jaipur *Raznamah*, a translation of the *Mahabharata**—are not uncommon of the Akbar period; but so far as I know the *Rasikapriya* from which our leaves are derived affords a unique example of a purely Hindu work, written in Hindi in Nagari characters, and lavishly illustrated by a Mughal artist. And Hindi manuscripts with illustrations of any kind are very rare. This was perhaps a special copy prepared for Indrajit Shah, Kesava Das' patron; or for Raja Birbal, on the occasion of the author's mission to the Mughal court on behalf of his patron. The separation of most of the pictures from their text is much to be regretted, as the subjects cannot now be precisely identified.

The subject matter, of course, is purely Hindu; and the persons of Radha and Krishna with the *sakhi* (confidante) and *dutika* (messenger) are the types in which the situations are exemplified. The pictures, moreover, are applied to the page in the Indian fashion, in the form of rectangular panels not organically combined with the text. The manner of the work, however, is distinctly Mughal, and must be so classed. It is similar to that of many books—usually Persian translations of Hindu stories—prepared for Akbar during the latter part of his reign; an example of the same kind will be found in a *Mahabharata* scene, M. F. A. 17.75, illustrated in the Bulletin of the Museum, No. 93.

*Reproductions in T. H. Hendley, *Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition, 1883*, Vol. IV.

॥अथ उस्मधानलक्षण॥ एकद्वौश्चनरुलुजीयजद्वौश्च
 तिक्कलुकेसवड्मसीधानमरसुसोलतुतहामरुलुदैदधिदोउ
 उधारैहोकेसवदाउकहाश्चरुमाललेषेहो॥दानेवीनीतोगइज्ज
 इनगइनधरहिफिरिजेहे॥गोहितुवेरुकियोवरुनिकेकेवेरुकी
 गोरसुवेवज्जगीश्चदेवेच्योनवेच्योतोद्वारिनदेहे॥पत्रडुधलक्ष
 ण॥जैहोजहानवृकियैकरियैतेमौपुष्टु॥विनिविचारजोवरनिये
 सोरसपवीडुष्टकपटकरपानीशेमरसलपटानीधननिकेगंगाज्जके
 पानसमपानिये॥स्यारथतिधानीधानपरमारथीकीराजधानिका
 मकीकहानीकेसोदासजगजानीये॥सुवरनश्चरजानीसुधासोसुधा
 रिशानीसकलसयानसानीगानीसुषदानिया॥गौराजैगिरालजानीमो
 हमुनिमृहग्यानीशेसीदानीमेरीरानीविषुकेवषानिये॥केसवक
 रुनाहासकऊअरुवीनत्समिंगासु॥वरनतवीरनयानकहासांत
 नवेरुविचासु॥नयउपजैवान्तमतेश्चरुमिगाररहासुकेसवश्चरु
 तुवीरतेकरुणाकोपशकासु॥शहिविधिकेसवदासरसयनरसक
 हैविचारिावरनतसुलपरिजहाकविक्कुललेजसुधाशि॥जैमैरसि
 कप्रियाविनादेखिये॥दिनेदिनदाना॥आहाताषाकविसवेरसिकप्रि
 याकरिदाना॥अतिवाहैरतिमतिअतिपडेजानैसवरमप्रियास्वार
 थपरमारथलहे॥रसिकप्रियाकीप्रति॥



“The flavor of what is hard to reconcile”

Mughal, about A. D. 1600

Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection

*Krishna's Toilet**Mughal, about A. D. 1600*

Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection

The trees are especially characteristic and represented by formulæ quite distinct from those of Rajput art; so, too, the suggestions of relief in the drawing of the figures, the treatment of the drapery, and the generally dry handling. The tonality, too, is in a lowered key, entirely different from that of contemporary Rajput art. That Krishna is represented as light brown rather than blue may be due to the realistic tendency of Mughal art. On the other hand, it should be noted that certain purely Indian features appear, not merely as of necessity in details of costume, gesture, and circumstance, but also in formulæ of representation; this is especially true of the treatment of clouds and falling rain (see Fig. 2, also Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting*, Pl. XVIII A.). We must suppose that a Mughal artist—who may well have been a Hindu—was working here for a Rajput patron.

The subject illustrated in the full page reproduction is "The flavor of what is hard to reconcile" (*Duḥsandhana rasa*), defined by Kesava Das as follows: "When one consents and the other refuses, Kesava declares that it is the 'flavor of what is hard to reconcile,' gaily and fully represented." The verse following this gives a dialogue between Krishna and a milkmaid; he asks for curd, which the milkmaid refuses with much sarcasm. The picture shows the same situation. Of the two reproductions lacking text, one shows Radha speaking—probably complaining of Krishna's absence—to her confidante, who holds her finger to her mouth in a gesture of astonishment; the emotional situation is further

defined by the heavy rain that is falling without. As in Vidyapati's poem—

"Impenetrable clouds are thundering incessantly
And all the world is full of rain;
Krishna is stone and Love is cruel;
A rain of arrows pierces me!"

The second example shows Radha holding up the mirror while Krishna ties his turban, the *sakhī* looking on; a single word of the text survives in the upper left-hand corner. A. K. C.

Leaf of a Koran

THE Museum has recently acquired an exceedingly handsome leaf of a Koran, Arabic or Egyptian, which may be assigned to the thirteenth century or earlier. Both sides of the leaf are illustrated opposite. The text includes the portion Sura XCIII, verse 5, to the title of Sura XCIV (the next). The manuscript is written on paper in Kufic characters, the marginal writing being in Nashkh. Kufic writing had gone out of general use long before the thirteenth century, and may be regarded here as an archaism. A. K. C.

Copleys and Stuarts in Boston

FOR the past two years the group of portraits by John S. Copley and Gilbert Stuart owned in Boston, which have been shown in the galleries of the Museum, has attained the proportion of a special exhibition of the work of these artists. At present the galleries contain forty paintings by Copley and fifty-six by Stuart.